

Environmental Public Health Tracking Workshop
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Title: Task Force on Cancer Clusters in New Jersey

Keywords: Cancer clusters, risk communication, cancer registry, surveillance

Background: Cancer clusters are of great concern in New Jersey. In 2003, the Commissioner of Health established the Task Force on Cancer Clusters in New Jersey. The Task Force was composed of 14 members representing interested citizens and organizations.

Objectives: The Task Force's objectives included: to evaluate cancer cluster investigation policies, procedures, guidelines, and best practices; develop priority strategies to implement best practices; and delineate roles and responsibilities of State agencies and partners.

Methods: The Task Force met ten times and sponsored two conferences with invited experts and stakeholders. The Task Force reviewed and discussed in detail: operations of the New Jersey State Cancer Registry; cancer incidence and mortality trends in New Jersey; key definitions and concepts of cancer clusters; cancer cluster response and surveillance protocols in New Jersey and other jurisdictions; risk communication related to cancer clusters; and existing roles of State agencies and its partners.

Results and Conclusions: The Task Force made numerous recommendations regarding: the collection of cancer data and related risk factor information; cancer cluster response; prospective surveillance for cancer clusters; development of integrated, geographically-based and time-specific environmental exposure metrics; and delineation of partner roles. The poster will outline the recommendations of the Task Force in detail.

Evaluation: The Task Force brought together diverse stakeholders and experts, provided a forum for discussion of complex technical and communications issues, and led to recommendations for enhanced prospective public health surveillance in New Jersey linking cancer and environmental databases.

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